

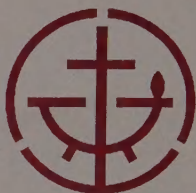
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THE CHRISTIAN UNITY MOVEMENT
IN AMERICA

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF
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THE CHRISTIAN UNITY MOVEMENT IN AMERICA

BY

FREDERICK LYNCH, D.D.

EDITOR OF "THE CHRISTIAN WORK"; EDUCATIONAL
SECRETARY OF THE CHURCH PEACE UNION AND THE
WORLD ALLIANCE FOR INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP
THROUGH THE CHURCHES; AUTHOR OF "THE NEW
OPPORTUNITIES OF THE MINISTRY," "WHAT MAKES
A NATION GREAT," "THE PEACE PROBLEM," ETC.

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PREFACE

THIS little book consists of lectures delivered at Uppsala University in May, 1922, on the Olaus Petri Foundation. They were afterwards repeated at the University of Copenhagen by invitation of the Divinity Faculty. They were also delivered before the Clergy of Christiania, Norway, upon invitation of the Ministerial Association of that city.

The subject is one suggested to me by Archbishop Söderblom. The lectures on the Olaus Petri Foundation are supposed to deal with some phase of Christian Unity, but that subject has been very freely interpreted by many of the previous lecturers, so that some of the lectures have dealt with phases of religious experience only indirectly related to the problem of unity. The last course of lectures, however, by the Bishop of Durham, dealt with the attitude of the Anglican Church toward unity

Preface

and it seemed wise and fitting to have the course for this year deal with the American Churches and the problem of unity.

It will at once be seen that these lectures are written for foreign audiences, not for Americans. This accounts for the presence of some passages which would be, in America, in the nature of repetition of what has already been written, and it also accounts to a certain degree, for the style. The lectures were delivered in English, and it was better to be quite explicit and direct in utterance. The weeks spent in Sweden, Norway and Denmark will always stand out among those delightful experiences to which the memory continually reverts. To the Archbishop of Sweden, whose guest I was during my stay, I can never sufficiently express my gratitude for making possible this participation in the inner, spiritual life of these wonderful people of the North.

FREDERICK LYNCH.

New York,

August 30th, 1922.

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I

The Origin of the Interest in Unity

THE interest in America in Christian Unity had its origin in the same conditions and dissatisfactions that prevail in Europe, only in America the divisions in the Church far outnumber those in other lands. There are over one hundred and fifty denominations in America. Too much weight should not be given to these appalling figures though, for most of these groups are really not denominations or communions in any real sense of the word, but are simply little sects which emphasise some point entirely extraneous to the great creeds and formulas of the Church, extraneous to the Scriptures too, when the Scriptures are taken as a whole. They are often made up of people with a "twist" in their minds, and none of them are based on any *fundamental* religious or ethical differences. As a matter of fact there are hardly more real denominations

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or communions in America than in England, when one takes into consideration those which really count. The communions in America which would be named as having weight and influence, either by numbers or character, would be, to name them in the order of their size: Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Disciples, Presbyterian, Congregationalist and Protestant Episcopal. Two or three of these groups are small, but they have had great weight in the religious life of America because of the character of their members. Thus Congregationalism dominated New England during all those years when New England was the seat of American culture. Most of America's great literary lights were either Congregationalists or Unitarians—her poets, essayists, and philosophers. From these communions came many of the great preachers, and for a while most of the scholars. Things have changed somewhat, but Congregationalism, with few numbers, is still a powerful religious force in America. What I am trying to show, however, is that, after all, the sectarian divisions of America are about the same as those in England.

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It should also be remembered that the outstanding denominations can again be reduced by the fact that some of the communions which are under separate connotation are practically one in every sense that counts. Thus we have two communions within Methodism, the Methodist Church South, and the Methodist Church North. The same is true of the Presbyterian and Baptist communions. These divisions did not come about through religious or theological difference, but through political issues. Theologically and religiously they are practically the same, except that the Northern groups are tinged a little more with liberalism. There is nothing to keep them apart except the difficulties of adjusting separate administrations, questions of property, and perhaps the relinquishing of certain official posts and emoluments that would follow upon union. During the last twenty years negotiations looking toward unity have been going on, and in spite of the difficulties referred to above, the union will come between all Methodists, all Presbyterians (with the Reformed Churches coming in perhaps) and all Baptists. The ease with which three groups of Lutherans came

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together when they really went at the task in earnest is an encouragement to these other bodies.

What causes then have operated in these great communions to inspire the movement toward unity and what steps have been taken—what has been accomplished? That will be the subject of the first part of our inquiries.

As I said at the beginning, the impulse in America toward unity had its inception in the same conditions and the same convictions that have been back of the movement in every land. They might be summed up as follows :

1. The conviction that the vision and hope of the Founder and Lord of the Church is destroyed by His own separated followers. He wished His Church to be one that it might witness before the world to the unity between Him and the Father, to the unity of His disciples in Him, to the unity of the Faith. He prayed that we might all be one. Instead of that we are ten or twelve, and we Protestants have sometimes put more emphasis upon our differences than upon our unity, although, thank God, that time has largely passed. This violation of the unity our Lord

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asked of us has weighed more and more upon our consciences and has been one of the main inspirations to seek real unity.

2. A second motive was the consciousness that the mission and work of the Church was being immeasurably impaired by our divisions. There are great evils to fight, powerfully intrenched, venomous, vigorous, stubborn, terribly determined. A divided Church could not overcome them. These were great tasks to be done, the home-land to be saved for Christ, foreign fields to be won for Him. A divided Church could not do this as could a united Church. (The experience in the missionary endeavour of the Church bears this out at every point as testified to in a remarkable book by Dr. Arthur J. Brown, of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, "Unity on the Foreign Missionary Field." Here the Churches have been driven into unity by the urgency of the case, and perhaps the Churches at home are to learn unity from the children they have begotten.)

3. Closely aligned to this conviction was that of the wastefulness of our divisions. This has been particularly borne in upon us in

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America where during the past fifty years we have been settling new towns throughout the great middle-west, although the same condition has faced us in our older eastern towns. In a little village of, say, one thousand people one might find five Protestant churches. Each one of these churches is too weak to do efficient work. There are not enough people in each one to support it. This means that churches founded to do the Lord's work for the community and to serve the whole people consume all their energy in a desperate struggle to keep alive. "He that saveth his soul shall lose it." Often an unhealthy, and sometimes bitter, competition arises among these churches, and cases have been frequent where one church tried to live off another. Desperate efforts were made by each church to get preachers who would "draw." Laymen have perhaps been more moved by the religious and economic waste, too, of all this than by any other cause.

(It should be said here that very powerful influence has been brought to bear upon the denominational boards by the broad-minded men in the various communions to stop this

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reduplication of effort, this un-Christian competition, this inexcusable waste, and agreements have been made in several instances that where a church of one denomination occupies the field and is satisfactorily ministering to it, churches of other communions will remain out. It is terribly difficult though for ecclesiastical heads of some denominations to rise to this Christian height.)

4. The consciousness has been gradually coming over some of our prophetic souls that no denomination is big enough to minister the fulness of Christ's message to the world. The Lambeth Appeal implies this, but it has found increasing expression in America. Let me quote Bishop Manning, of New York, as an instance of one who has seen this: "Unity is necessary for the fulness of the Church's message. A divided Church can neither apprehend, nor teach, the full truth of Christ. Denominationalism is necessarily one-sided. It makes for disproportion, narrowness of view, over-emphasis on some elements of truth, and neglect of other elements."

5. There has also come to many the conviction that denominationalism produces types

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of Christian character within the denomination so that one might almost say of some whose whole religious life has been confined to one denominational experience ; " He is a Methodist or a Baptist " rather than " He is a Christian." This is not so true as it was once, but it was true in the past, and was one of the things that helped to set broad-minded men thinking. Here again let me quote Bishop Manning. " Unity is necessary for the fulness of life in the Church. The development of special spiritual types in separate groups is a loss to all. The contact of all types in the one household is needed for interest and stimulus, for mutual education and discipline, for the enrichment and full realisation of Christian character. Each group of Christians needs to share the spiritual experience and the special gifts of each other group. Only in unity and fellowship can we learn the full meaning of our Christian heritage. Great ranges of new power in Christ will open to all of us in the life of the Christian Church."

6. Another thing that has worked almost imperceptibly to turn men toward thoughts of unity has been the growing habit of working,

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either as denominations separately, or in co-operation with other denominations, for the Kingdom of God instead of for denominational ends. As Professor George W. Richards has said: "An ever-growing conception of the Kingdom of God as wider than any Church, and as the goal for all Churches has been a motive force. Once denominations with good conscience worked for their own interests and through the denomination for the salvation of souls. Now men work primarily for the salvation of souls in the interest of the Kingdom of God. Denominations are thought of as means to a higher end. When men come under the power of this vision of the Kingdom, the things which divide the Church diminish and the things which unite the Church increase." The men who have worked in the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ or in the various Missions Councils or the Y.M.C.A. have also come under this influence.

7. Perhaps the strongest conviction now impelling many to seek unity, the chief source of the new enthusiasm, is the consciousness that already we are one in the things that really matter; that we are divided over the things that

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really do not count. In the great fundamental, essential things of the faith we are one ; it is in the lesser, perhaps passing things that we are divided. With the exception of the two or three really radical interpretations of the Christian faith and the nature of the Church which separates Protestants and Catholics, there are no distinctions that might be called of the essence of the faith. They were once considered so, but the very fact that some of them have already come to receive less emphasis, and that in many minds they have already been abandoned as essentials, is a sign that they belong not to the essence or the eternity of the faith. But it was these things that brought about many of the divisions. Generally it was one of these lesser, unessential things, things which neither Christ nor the Church nor the Creeds mentioned that led to the divisions among Protestants and gave the new sect its character. A great change is coming over the prophetic souls in the various denominations in this regard. Perhaps the most outstanding illustration in America is that of Baptists and Congregationalists. They hold the same body of doctrine, generally speaking. They have

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the same idea of polity, namely the free, independent congregation. The only distinction that marks these two groups off one from the other is the theory and mode of Baptism and the question of whether the doors to the Lord's supper shall be open to all or not. These two things surely cannot be put into the category of the great, eternal foundation truths of the Gospel or the Church, and yet they are the walls of partition. They are beginning to break in many places. They have practically gone in England. They are crumbling in individual Baptist churches in America. There have been several instances of union communion services in which Baptists and Congregationalists have taken part. One of the large Baptist churches in New York receives members by letter from Congregational and other churches—members who were baptised in infancy. The feeling is becoming very general in America that since the things which divide are not of the essence of the faith, they are not great enough to be allowed to stand in the way of that unity which Christ desires, and which the Church needs if it is to witness to the full faith, convince the world of its divine origin and

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mission, effectively build the Kingdom of God and vanquish and banish the evil of the world.*

* Another conviction has gradually come to a few souls who have been somewhat alarmed over the persistent state of division in the Church, namely, that the Church by any division in its ranks or conflict within its own borders makes it easier for that large and persistent group of radicals, who in novel, drama, tract and outspoken utterance are attacking not only its doctrines but its very morals and philosophy of life, to make their points. The division within the Church is one of the things to which they first direct their attention. They point it out as the one first sign of weakness. How can an army divided against itself be either inspired or do any great thing? "It is a living lie," they say.

II

The Growth of Christian Co-operation

TURNING now to sketch the progress of the movement in America, to what extent have these various convictions thus far found expression? The answer is: to a very considerable extent in the matter of interdenominational co-operation and endeavour, not to a very great extent so far as organic union is concerned. It was natural, as well as inevitable, a necessity of the case, that these promptings toward unity should find first expression in co-operation. This co-operation has been very widespread in America and reached a higher stage of perfection and a larger degree of universality than in any other land. I do not know, either in Great Britain or on the Continent, any co-operative movement of the Churches to be compared to "The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America," in universality of representation, in

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comprehensiveness of work or in the power it has to speak for its constituent bodies. Let us first briefly survey the progress of this co-operation among the denominations. I will pass over it quickly for it is organic union we are interested in here rather than in Christian unity. Yet they are closely related after all, and the Christian unity is certainly a step toward organic Church union.*

The first widespread and full expression of Christian unity within the United States was in *The Evangelical Alliance*. It was born in England, as was the Y.M.C.A., but America has a habit of borrowing a good beginning and then making it distinctively her own. When the idea of *The Evangelical Alliance* came to America—although it was twenty years after it was born in London—all those anxious, eager

* Some of our friends deny this. There is a group in the Protestant Episcopal Church who are intensely interested in Church Union who feel that Christian unity as it finds expression in the Federal Council of Churches, for instance, is a hindrance rather than a help to organic union. They feel that the Churches will be satisfied with unity and co-operation and rest there, while they seek the organic union of the whole Church of Christ. Also some of them feel that the Episcopal (Anglican) Church is called to be a sort of mediator between Catholicism and Protestantism, and should not therefore tie up with either group alone. It is fair to say though that the opinion that all of these successes in Christian unity are real steps toward Church union is almost universal in America.

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souls which had been waiting for just some such movement in which to find expression for their yearnings and visions, welcomed it with eager arms. It soon became a real expression of the hitherto unexpressed unity in the American Churches. Of course, it aroused much fear, there was suspicion and timidity on the part of many; but the denominations rallied to it, and perhaps at the first great conference of the Alliance held in America the aspirations for unity found their first expression on a large scale.

The call for this gathering in New York in 1873 says nothing about organic union, but it is highly significant as being perhaps the first call signed by practically the whole of American Protestantism expressing a beautiful and big desire for unity. This call defined the purpose of the conference to be "to bring Europe and America together in Christ for closer union and fellowship, for a united testimony against unbelief and false belief, for the promotion of peace and good-will among the nations of the earth, and for the encouragement of every good work of the Master." . . . The Alliance held other conferences in America

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and the American Churches responded to them with great enthusiasm. The organisation came just in time to give expression to the longing for unity that was everywhere being born. Not only did it give this feeling a home and organ, but it prepared the way for the closer unity which was consummated in the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America.

The Federal Council was organised in 1908, when a plan of federation was adopted by the national assemblies of thirty denominations, but its real birth was at a very wonderful meeting held in New York in 1905. Dr. E. B. Sanford, Josiah Strong, and William Hayes Ward, in association with many like-minded spirits—they had all of them been leaders in the Evangelical Alliance—issued an invitation to the Protestant bodies of the United States to come to New York for a ten days' conference on federation. The official title of the gathering was *The Inter-Church Conference on Federation*. The Churches responded heartily and it was one of the most memorable gatherings in Church history. It was practically the first time the communions themselves had been

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together, with delegates officially appointed and with real power. The plan for permanent Federation put forth at this gathering was adopted and the Federal Council came into being in 1908, with the following five official declarations as its avowed object :

1. To express the fellowship and catholic unity of the Christian Church.

2. To bring the Christian bodies of America into united service for Christ and the world.

3. To encourage devotional fellowship and mutual consent concerning the spiritual life and religious activities of the Churches.

4. To secure a larger combined influence for the Churches of Christ in all matters affecting the moral and social condition of the people, so as to promote the application of the law of Christ to every relation of human life.

5. To assist in the organisation of local branches of the Federal Council to promote its aims in their communities.

The Council has developed on lines on the whole faithful to this original purpose, but has expanded to touch the whole religious life of America. The point always to be remembered and which gives to it such significance in the

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movement for union is that it is composed of the communions themselves, not simply of individuals belonging to various communions, as in the case of the Y.M.C.A. for example, not simply of administrative officers forming a Council by delegation from their official boards, as in the Home Missions Council, where the officers of the various Mission Boards are counselling and working together ; but it is a Council of the communions themselves. It meets once in four years and its conclusions have come to be pretty generally recognised as expressing the convictions of the united Protestantism of America. It has several commissions which deal with the application of the gospel to the various spheres of life—social, industrial, international. These commissions are very active and reveal Christian unity in continual operation. The Council has ever since its inception been engaged in federating the Churches in various States and cities, and has here rendered an invaluable service to Christian unity. It has been very active in uniting the Churches in work for international good-will, and during the war and afterwards rendered most unique and valuable service to

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France and Belgium, helping to raise several hundred thousand dollars for relief and also for reconstruction of the demolished Churches. During the war it put forth many striking encyclicals in the name of American Protestantism. While the Conference on the Limitation of Armaments was in session at Washington the Council was in constant touch with all the Churches, and addressed many communications to the Conference in their name. It has also been the right hand of the great societies for European relief, and has been the means of raising or helping to raise many millions of dollars for these purposes. The question of organic union has never been brought officially before it, but every year of its existence, every act it has performed, every meeting it has held, has been a preparation for that union when the time for it shall have come. Nothing has done so much to generate the spirit of brotherhood, to turn the mind of the brethren from the denomination to the Kingdom of God and to bring about that mutual understanding and acquaintance which must precede and be a vital part of any organic union of the Churches.

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The other great attempt of the communions themselves to work together was both a success and a failure. I refer to *The Inter-Church World Movement*. It came into being suddenly, loomed large for a day, and disappeared as suddenly as it was born. Our chief interest in it lies in the fact that it was a movement of the denominations themselves, although one source of its weakness was that it was thrust upon the denominations hurriedly instead of having been born out of them. It was, however, an attempt at unity on the biggest, grandest scale the world has ever seen. Practically all the Protestant denominations associated themselves together to undertake a united crusade for the Kingdom of God. It undertook to make a survey of every village in America that the local Churches and the Home Missions Boards might know just the exact conditions to be met, the needs and the opportunity. At the same time it was to make a survey of every foreign land for the benefit of the Missions Boards. On the basis of these facts it was to conduct a great campaign of education, and try to enlist thousands of young men for the ministry and for Christian work.

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It was to try and co-ordinate all religious agencies and to help the whole Church in its corporate existence give voice to the Christian convictions on industrial relations and all social problems. Finally, it was to make a combined appeal to the nation for sums commensurate with those given in other big drives to which the country had become accustomed during the war. It was thought that the denominations appealing together might, by the very dramatic nature of such a spectacular act, secure much more, even for themselves, than by each denomination appealing separately. It was also thought that thousands of men not hitherto interested in the Church might be moved to give by seeing that at last all Protestantism had got together to do big things with united front for righteousness. The movement failed for many reasons which I cannot enter into here. Suffice it only to say here that its success was its superb vision of a united Protestantism accomplishing a vast world redemption ; its failure was in methods which were contrary to the nature and genius of religion—religion cannot be promoted by drives, bond issues, and theatrical publicity methods—

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and in believing that the man outside the Church would be interested in a great, united Church more than in the little Baptist or Methodist Church in his village. Its chief interest for us is in its vision of unity. Nothing finer than these four reasons, given by itself as the forces that lay behind the movement, can be imagined :

“The first was the growing sense of kinship among the evangelical Churches and the desire to give it expression.”

“The second was the consciousness of the fragmentary and inadequate effort hitherto put forth to carry out the programme of world service to which the Church is called.”

“The third was the realisation of the vast and urgent tasks laid upon us by the effects of the great War.”

“The fourth was the hope and belief that by co-operative action larger enlistment of life and treasure could be secured and better results be obtained for energy exerted.”

* * * *

There have been several instances where the officers of the various Mission Boards of

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the Protestant Communions, with the approval of their national assemblies, have associated themselves together for council and co-operative endeavour, which have worked wonderfully for mutual understanding and unity. Chief among these are *The Foreign Missions Conference of North America*; *the Home Missions Council*; *The Council for Women for Home Missions*; *The Council of Church Boards of Education*; and *The Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations*.

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Of course, we have in America a large number of undenominational organisations which other countries share with us, and which have been immeasurable in their influence toward unity—*The Y.M.C.A.*, and *The Y.W.C.A.* and *The Christian Endeavour Society*. *The Christian Endeavour Society* has been particularly helpful in promoting unity, for it is directly related to the Churches as the Y.M.C.A. is not, and it has brought hundreds of thousands of members of various communions together while they were young. It is only just to say here that its founder and leader, Dr. Francis E. Clarke,

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has always emphasised the work for unity. *The Christian Student Movement* has also been one of the most powerful agencies for union.

* * * *

But besides these we have had several undenominational movements on a large and outstanding scale, where many men—mostly laymen—have organised themselves into large groups for distinctively Christian ends. The two most outstanding instances of these are *The Laymen's Missionary Movement*, founded in 1906, and *The Men and Religion Forward Movement*, founded in 1912—another laymen's movement. In both of these great movements loyalty to the Kingdom of God as surpassing loyalty to the denomination found continual emphasis. Great conferences were held all over the country, and chosen laymen, going out two together as did the apostles, toured the whole nation for Christ and not for any denomination.

* * * *

In completing this survey of agencies making for real Christian co-operation one

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word should be said about the unique organisation, *The Church Peace Union*, for here we have Roman Catholics co-operating with Protestants in a great Christian endeavour. In 1914 Andrew Carnegie created a foundation under the title of *The Church Peace Union*. Twenty-nine trustees were chosen, representing all the large denominations in the United States. To these trustees he gave the sum of \$2,000,000, the income of which was to be used for the promotion of international good-will through the Churches. The first thing that this Foundation did was to bring together about one hundred representatives of the Churches of Europe and America in Constance for a conference. Out of this conference the *World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches* was born. Every year this group—constantly being enlarged—meets somewhere in Europe, and the most eminent representatives of the Churches are present. This year, 1922, it meets in Copenhagen, and it is expected that two hundred delegates, representing all denominations, including the Eastern Churches, from all the countries of Europe, from China and Japan

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and from America, will be there. This is now a world movement, but it had its inception through the joint efforts of a few Americans and Englishmen, and I mention it here as a sign of that longing for Christian co-operation that is being felt by the most prophetic souls in America. (You will be interested in knowing that next to international peace, Christian unity was Mr. Carnegie's great interest.)

III

Steps Toward Organic Union

THUS far we have been dealing with the progress of Christian Unity or Christian co-operation, especially as it has expressed itself in federated movements. (A very masterly and complete survey of all these movements can be found in the fourth report of the American Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook: "Christian Unity: Its Principles and Possibilities.") I want now to turn to the subject in which we are especially interested here: the progress made toward organic union, toward the real, actual, oneness of the Church. I have not time to name all the individuals in America who, beginning as early as 1844, saw a vision of an united Church. There have been many such prophetic souls. Dr. Leonard Bacon, a Congregationalist, as far back as 1844, in an article in *The New Englander*, suggested that a Conference of all

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the Churches of the world be called "for union and communion." He seemed to have in mind about what the present World Conference on Faith and Order is seeking. Alexander Campbell, one of the founders of The Disciples, preached the gospel of union. It was in this communion that the vigorous society, *The Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity*, was formed, and Dr. Peter Ainslie, its President, has the same vision its founder had. (This organisation has rendered very valuable service by publishing an excellent magazine devoted to the cause and by holding conferences of the different denominations up and down the country.)

In America the Protestant Episcopal Church has always been interested in union. As far back as 1792 Bishop Madison offered a resolution in the General Convention, suggesting a conference with other communions looking towards union. In 1853 William Augustus Muhlenberg, a name venerated in the Protestant Episcopal Church, signed, with ten others, a Memorial addressed "to the Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Council assembled," which went so far as to say that "a

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wider door must be opened for admission to the gospel ministry . . . of men who could not bring themselves to conform in all particulars to our prescriptions and customs, yet sound in the faith." Thirty-three years afterwards the House of Bishops of the General Convention in Chicago issued a Declaration concerning unity. This was in 1886, and it led to the appointment of a Committee to consider the whole question of organic union. This committee has great historic significance because in its report it mentioned four points "essential to the restoration of unity among the divided branches of Christendom," which, with slight amendment, were adopted as the famous Lambeth Quadrilateral in 1887.

In all the communions these prophets of the United Church have spoken until at last several of our large communions have commissions on organic union which devote their time to the study of the question, confer with each other from time to time and frequently meet with the Protestant Episcopal Commission on Faith and Order for prolonged discussion. There was also formed in New York about twenty years ago, *The Christian Unity*

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Foundation. At first its trustees were all members of the Protestant Episcopal Church, but in 1919 trustees from other communions were added. It has published many pamphlets on the subject of organic union and arranges for a series of lectures on the subject every spring, given by the most distinguished preachers and scholars of the Churches.

When one comes to consider actual progress toward union the attempts made do not seem to have carried us very far, but they have been real steps forward, and two of the attempts have been such signal successes that they at least hold out the very sanguine hope that all those Churches bearing the same name or having practically the same polity and ecclesiastical order may soon come together. Perhaps the most remarkable success has been that of the creation in 1918 of *The United Lutheran Church in America*, where three great bodies have united in one real Church, having surrendered both their separate identities and their names. (Previous to this five groups of Norwegian Lutherans had come together in *The Norwegian Lutheran Church in America*.)

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The reunion of the regular Baptists and the Free Baptists is another instance of success—success brought about by gradual steps, too, for the two conventions began meeting together and then agreed to unite. There have been two instances of actual reunion also where the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. has received into its Assembly the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church.

Meantime, the two great bodies of the Presbyterian Church are carrying on negotiations looking toward union. The Presbyterian Church is also negotiating with the Reformed Church and the United Presbyterian Church, and a tentative plan of union has already been approved, whereby an United Assembly is to be constituted with the title of "The United Assembly of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches of the United States of America." Between the Methodist Episcopal Church North and the Methodist Episcopal Church South negotiations for union are also going on. In all these instances I think speedy union is highly probable, and it will be a great step forward when these several large groups which

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belong by origin, nature, order and faith together, become one.

I want now to tell you of the three attempts toward reunion being made on a large scale, and in two of which several communions are implicated. I take these three steps looking toward organic unity in order of time.

1. The first is that of *The World Conference on Faith and Order*. (It is now a world movement, but it had its inception in America, and was for a time confined to America in its operations.) As we have seen the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church issued the famous "Quadrilateral" in 1886. In 1910 the interest in Christian unity in that communion had become so great that the General Convention, meeting in Cincinnati, appointed a Commission to arrange for a *World Conference on Faith and Order*. The resolution asking for such a Commission read in part as follows: "We believe that the time has now arrived when representatives of the whole family of Christ, led by the Holy Spirit, may be willing to come together for the consideration of Faith and Order. . . . It is our conviction that such a conference for

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the purpose of study and discussion, without power to legislate or to adopt resolutions, is the next step toward unity." The other large Communion appointed similar commissions to meet with this one, and a series of the most fruitful conferences ever held in America have gone on from year to year. Meantime the Commission sent delegations to both the Anglican and Free Church groups in England and it was their visits, with an appeal from the American Commission to create similar commissions in Great Britain, which led to the starting of those conferences between Anglicans and Free Churchmen that have been productive of such fruitful and unexpected results. The movement has now become a world movement with an international committee, and held a large preliminary conference at Geneva in 1920; but I mention it here because it had its inception in America, and was the fruit of a long process of yearning and striving toward real union in the hearts of American Churchmen.

2. *The American Council on Organic Union.*

In 1918 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church adopted a resolution calling for

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a conference of Presbyterians and members of other communions to discuss plans for organic union. This conference was convened in December of 1918, and seventeen denominations accepted the invitation of their Presbyterian brethren and were present. Much enthusiasm was shown and it looked as if a new day had dawned and that at last the Churches were really ready to discuss union. It has been felt by many that had the conference confined itself to this one question of organic union its future influence would have been greater than it has been, for it must be confessed that it has not fulfilled the promise of its birth nor accomplished the great things many that day thought were at last to come. This was largely due to the fact that in its covenant and plans it incorporated practically the same tasks already being splendidly done by *The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America*. This kept some communions from joining and caused one at least afterwards to withdraw. This fear of reduplication of effort also kept many of the outstanding leaders of the Church from joining. It has not filled a large place in the movement for unity, but it has great significance

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as an indication of the high point that the feeling for real union has reached. For those Presbyterians who called it had organic union distinctly in mind and those seventeen communions which accepted and became a part of the Council did so with the thought of *organic union* uppermost. Indeed, a measure of disappointment was quietly expressed by some even at the initial conference that other things besides organic union had been incorporated in the covenant. The plan called for an immediate act of union, inasmuch as the Churches to subscribe to the covenant associated themselves in a visible body to be known as the "United Churches of Christ in America," and in the plan of Union they expressly say, "In taking this step we look forward with confident hope to that complete unity toward which we believe the Spirit of God is leading us."

3. We now come to the famous *Concordat* of 1919. This *Concordat* consists of proposals for an approach towards unity prepared by members of the Protestant Episcopal Church and of the Congregational Churches in the United States, in March, 1919. Perhaps nothing has created more discussion in America

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on the question of Church Union than has this *Concordat*, signed as it is by ten of the leading men of each communion (clergymen and laymen) and making proposals that are concrete, suggesting definite action, planning to do an actual deed of unity, and to take a step toward removing what some consider the greatest obstacle to unity, namely, the questioning of the validity of orders of one denomination by another. The proposals are followed by a suggested canon to be adopted by the Protestant Episcopal Church. The Proposals and Canon read as follows :

“ The undersigned members of the Protestant Episcopal Church and of Congregational Churches, without any official sanction and purely on our private initiative, have conferred with each other, partly by correspondence and partly by meeting, with a view to discover a method by which a practical approach towards making clear and evident the visible unity of believers in our Lord according to His will, might be made. For there can be no question that such is our Lord’s will. The Church itself, in the midst of its divisions, bears convincing witness to it. ‘ There is one Body and

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one Spirit, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism.' There has never been, there can never be, more than one Body or one Baptism. On this we are agreed. There is one fellowship of the Baptised, made one by grace, and in every case by the self-same grace. And the unity given and symbolised by Baptism is in its very nature visible.

"We are agreed that it is our Lord's purpose that believers in Him should be one visible society. Into such a society, which we recognise as the Holy Catholic Church, they are initiated by Baptism; whereby they are admitted to fellowship with Him and with one another. The Unity which is essential to His Church's effective witness and work in the world must express and maintain this fellowship. It cannot be fully realised without community of worship, faith and order, including common participation in the Lord's Supper. Such unity would be compatible with a rich diversity in life and worship.

"We have not discussed the origin of the episcopate historically or its authority doctrinally; but we agree to acknowledge that the recognised position of the episcopate in the greater part of Christendom as the normal

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nucleus of the Church's ministry and as the organ of the unity and continuity of the Church is such that the members of the Episcopal Churches ought not to be expected to abandon it in assenting to any basis of reunion.

"We also agree to acknowledge that Christian Churches not accepting the episcopal order have been used by the Holy Spirit in His work of enlightening the world, converting sinners, and perfecting saints. They came into being through reactions from grave abuses in the Church at the time of their origin, and were led in response to fresh apprehensions of divine truth to give expression to certain necessary and permanent types of Christian experience, aspiration and fellowship, and to secure rights of Christian people which had been neglected or denied.

"No Christian community is involved in the necessity of disowning its past; but it should bring its own distinctive contribution not only to the common life of the Church, but also to its methods of organisation. Many customs and institutions which have been developed in separate communities may be preserved within the larger unity. What we

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desire to see is not grudging concession, but a willing acceptance of the treasures of each for the common enrichment of the united Church.

“To give full effect to these principles in relation to the Churches to which we respectively belong requires some form of corporate union between them. We greatly desire such corporate union. We also are conscious of the difficulties in the way of bringing it about, including the necessity for corporate action, even with complete good-will on both sides. In this situation we believe that a practical approach toward eventual union may be made by the establishment of inter-communion in particular instances. It is evident to us that corporate union between bodies whose members have become so related will thereby be facilitated. Mutual understanding and sympathy will strongly reinforce the desire to be united in a common faith and order, and will make clearer how the respective contributions of each community can best be made available to all.

“We recognise as a fact, without discussing whether it is based upon sound foundations, that in the Episcopal Churches an apprehension exists that if episcopally-conferred

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orders were added to the authority which non-episcopal ministers have received from their own communions, such orders might not be received and used in all cases in the sense or with the intention with which they are conferred. Upon this point there ought to be no room for doubt. The sense or intention in which any particular order of the ministry is conferred or accepted is the sense or intention in which it is held in the Universal Church. In conferring or in accepting such ordination neither the bishop ordaining nor the minister ordained should be understood to impugn thereby the efficacy of the minister's previous ministry.

“The like principle applies to the ministration of sacraments. The minister acts not merely as the representative of the particular congregation then present, but in a larger sense he represents the Church Universal; and his intention and meaning should be our Lord's intention and meaning as delivered to and held by the Catholic Church. To this end such sacramental matter and form should be used as shall exhibit the intention of the Church.

“When communion has been established

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between the ordaining bishop of the Episcopal Church and the ordained minister of another communion, appropriate measures ought to be devised to maintain it by participating in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and by mutual counsel and co-operation.

“We are not unmindful that occasions may arise when it might become necessary to take cognisance of supposed error of faith or of conduct, and suitable provisions ought to be made for such cases.

“In view of the limitations imposed by the law and practice of the Episcopal Church upon its bishops with regard to ordination, and the necessity of obtaining the approval of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church to the project we have devised, a form of canonical sanction has been prepared which is appended as a schedule to this statement. We who are members of the Episcopal Church are prepared to recommend its enactment. We who are members of Congregational Churches regard it as a wise basis upon which in the interests of Church unity, and without sacrifice on either side, the supplementary ordination herein contemplated might be accepted.

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“ It is our conviction that such procedure as we here outline is in accordance, as far as it goes, with our Lord’s purposes for His Church; and our fond hope is that it would contribute to heal the Church’s divisions. In the mission field it might prove of great value in uniting the work. In small communities it might put an end to the familiar scandal of more churches than the spiritual needs of the people require. In the army and navy, chaplains so ordained could minister acceptably to the adherents of Christian bodies who feel compunctions about the regularity of a non-episcopal ministry. In all places an example of a practical approach to Christian unity, with the recognition of diversities in organisation and in worship, would be held up before the world. The will to unity would be strengthened, prejudices would be weakened, and the way would become open in the light of experience to bring about a more complete organic unity of Christian Churches.

“ While this plan is the result of conference in which members of only one denomination of non-episcopal Churches have taken part, it is comprehensive enough to include in its scope ministers of all other non-episcopal communions,

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and we earnestly invite their sympathetic consideration and concurrence."

BOYD VINCENT, Bishop of Southern Ohio.

PHILIP M. RHINELANDER, Bishop of Pennsylvania.

WM. CABELL BROWN, Bishop of Virginia.

HUGHELL FOSBROKE, Dean of the Gen. Theol. Seminary.

WILLIAM T. MANNING, Rector of Trinity Church, New York.

CHARLES L. SLATTERY, Rector of Grace Church, New York.

HOWARD B. ST. GEORGE, Professor in Nashotah Seminary.

FRANCIS LYNDE STETSON.

ROBERT H. GARDINER.

GEORGE ZABRISKIE, Chancellor of the Diocese of New York. Hon. Sec., 23, Gramercy Park, New York.

WILLIAM H. DAY, Moderator of Congregational National Council.

HUBERT C. HERRING, Sec. of National Council.

CHARLES F. CARTER, Chairman of Executive Committee of National Council.

WILLISTON WALKER, of the Commission on Organisation.

HERBERT S. SMITH, of Commission on Unity.

WILLIAM E. BARTON, of Commission on Organisation.

NEHEMIAH BOYNTON, Ex-Moderator of National Council.

RAYMOND CALKINS, Chairman of Congregational Commission on Unity.

ARTHUR F. PRATT, Sec. of Commission on Unity.

WILLIAM T. McELVEEN, of Commission on Unity.

NEWMAN SMYTH, of Commission on Unity. Hon. Sec., 54, Trumbull Street, New Haven, Conn.

NEW YORK, *March 12th*, 1919.

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Then follows a form of Proposed Canon for adoption by the Protestant Episcopal Church, which is interesting as revealing with what thoroughness and heartiness the signers of this Concordat have gone into the whole subject.

“ I.—In case any Minister who has not received episcopal ordination shall desire to be ordained by a Bishop of this Church to the Diaconate and to the Priesthood without giving up or denying his membership or his ministry in the Communion to which he belongs the Bishop of the Diocese or Missionary District in which he lives, with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee or the Council of Advice, may confirm and ordain him.

“ II.—The Minister desiring to be so ordained shall satisfy the Bishop that he has resided in the United States at least one year ; that he has been duly baptised with water in the name of the Trinity ; that he holds the historic faith of the Church as contained in the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed ; that there is no sufficient objection on grounds physical, mental, moral or spiritual ; and that

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the ecclesiastical authority to which he is subject in the Communion to which he belongs consents to such ordination.

“ III.—At the time of his ordination the person to be ordained shall subscribe and make in the presence of the Bishop a declaration that he believes the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation ; that in the ministration of Baptism he will unfailingly baptise with water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost ; and (if he is being ordained to the Priesthood) that in the celebration of the Holy Communion he will invariably use the elements of bread and wine, and will include in the service the words and acts of our Lord in the institution of the Sacrament, the Lord’s Prayer, and (unless one of these Creeds has been used in the service immediately preceding the celebration of the Holy Communion) the Apostles’ or the Nicene Creed as the symbol of the faith of the Holy Catholic Church ; that when thereto invited by the Bishop of this Church having jurisdiction in the place where he lives, he will (unless unavoidably prevented) meet with such Bishop

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for Communion and for counsel and co-operation; and that he will hold himself answerable to the Bishop of this Church having jurisdiction in the place where he lives, or, if there be no such Bishop, to the Presiding Bishop of this Church, in case he be called in question with respect to error of faith or of conduct.

“ IV.—In case a person so ordained be charged with error of faith or of conduct, he shall have reasonable notice of the charge and reasonable opportunity to be heard, and the procedure shall be similar to the procedure in the case of a clergyman of this Church charged with a like offence. The sentence shall always be pronounced by the Bishop and shall be such as a clergyman of this Church would be liable to. It shall be certified to the ecclesiastical authority to which the defendant is responsible in any other Communion. If he shall have been tried before a tribunal of the Communion in which he has exercised his ministry, the judgment of such tribunal proceeding in the due exercise of its jurisdiction shall be taken as conclusive evidence of facts thereby adjudged.

“ V.—A Minister so ordained may officiate in a Diocese or Missionary District of this

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Church when licensed by the ecclesiastical authority thereof, but he shall not become the Rector or a Minister of any parish or congregation of this Church until he shall have subscribed and made to the Ordinary a declaration in writing whereby he shall solemnly engage to conform to the doctrine, discipline and worship of this Church. Upon his making such declaration and being duly elected Rector or Minister of a parish or congregation of this Church, and complying with the canons of this Church, and of the Diocese or Missionary District in that behalf, he shall become for all purposes a Minister of this Church."

When in the following year these proposals were laid before the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, they attracted a great deal of interest and aroused much discussion. Resolutions were passed, which, as you will see, show a real appreciation of the significance of the step suggested, and a Commission of fifteen was appointed to continue conference with the Congregational signatories and to report at the next General Convention. These resolutions were as follows :

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“Whereas, at sundry times in past years, and especially in 1853, in 1880, and in 1886, this General Convention, and the House of Bishops thereof, did set forth certain declarations relating to the Unity of the Church and the steps which, under God, might be taken to lead to such Unity ;

“And Whereas, there have now been laid before General Convention certain ‘Proposals for an Approach towards Unity,’ to which are attached the signatures of distinguished members of Congregational Churches and of this Church, which Proposals ask for the enactment of appropriate legislation whereby a Bishop may be authorised to confer the orders of the Diaconate and the Priesthood upon Ministers who have not received Episcopal ordination, under certain conditions therein enumerated ;

“And Whereas, these Proposals afford a hopeful basis for negotiations looking toward that end,

“Be it Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring :

“I.—That the General Convention recognises with profound gratitude to Almighty God the earnest desire of these representative

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members of Congregational Churches and of this Church to find a way by which the first step towards eventual Church unity may be taken, and especially the eirenic attitude of those who are not in communion with this Church, but who have indicated their desire to enter into certain relations with it for the furtherance of that unity for which we together pray.

“ II.—That as a step toward the accomplishment of so great a purpose, this Church hereby declares its willingness to initiate action which may make possible the ordination as Deacons and as Priests of Ministers in other Christian bodies who accept the Holy Scriptures as the revealed Word of God, the Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian Faith, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, under conditions which are stated in the aforementioned Proposals for an Approach toward Unity, whenever evidence shall be laid by any such applicant Minister before the Bishop of this Church having jurisdiction in the place in which such Minister resides of his acceptance of the principles set forth in those Proposals.

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“ We, however, direct the Joint Commission to be constituted that in proposing such legislation the following points shall be carefully considered :

“(a) That the Congregation, if any, in which such Minister officiates shall declare through its accustomed representatives its desire for such ordination on behalf of its Minister and its purpose to receive in future the ministrations and the sacraments of one who shall have been ordained to the Priesthood by a Bishop.

“(b) That every Minister so ordained shall, in celebrating Holy Communion, invariably incorporate in a Prayer of Consecration the Words of Our Lord in instituting that Sacrament, and also a suitable Oblation and Invocation of the Holy Spirit.

“(c) That he shall in no case administer the Holy Communion to an unbaptised person. And this Church will hopefully anticipate the use of the Apostolic practice of Confirmation.

“ III.—That a Joint Commission of five Bishops, five Presbyters, and five Laymen be appointed to continue conference with the

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Congregational Signatories to the said 'Proposals,' and to report to the next General Convention."

As I said, the interesting thing about these proposals is that they propose an act, a deed. It has not met with as hearty a reception among the Congregationalists as many had thought it might, largely because to the average Congregationalist it is all a fuss over nothing. He has always recognised the Episcopal orders as valid. If the Episcopal Church desires union, let it on its side recognise his, and the whole matter is settled. So the whole thing really comes back to this point : can several young Congregational Ministers or candidates for the ministry be found, who, for the sake of the future unity of the Church, will be willing to receive Episcopal Ordination, expressly affirming that they consider their ordination by the Congregational Ministers just as valid, but accept the Episcopal ordination as an act which confers upon them the right to minister in the Protestant Episcopal Church. I discussed this matter at some length in the last chapter, and will leave it here except that I must say that there is absolutely no prospect of a Congregational clergyman accepting

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Episcopal ordination except on this understanding, and it is interesting to note that the Rev. R. J. Campbell, of London, in the little book in which he tells the story of his passage from the Congregational to the Anglican Ministry ("A Spiritual Pilgrimage") emphasises the fact that in submitting to ordination at the hands of the bishop, he did not consider it so much as re-ordination—an ordination that would imply he was not already ordained—but he looked upon it as an act authorising him to minister to the Anglican Communion or as an act of initiation into *another* branch of Christ's Church.

IV

Obstacles to be Overcome : Satisfaction with Things as They Are

IN the previous lectures we have traced the history and progress of the movement toward Christian unity in America. Now we turn to see what are some of the obstacles to be overcome, some of the difficulties to be met. In doing this I want to say right at the beginning that I do not consider many of these obstacles as insuperable. Perhaps none of them are. I myself am very hopeful. I have seen some of these obstacles I shall mention here begin to pass away already—have seen many noble and prophetic souls rise above them into larger fields of light, and life and freedom. But in any movement it is always good to know just what obstacles we have got to meet that we may be prepared, just as it is wise to know the power of the enemy that we may strengthen ourselves before hand and make our plans accordingly. We make the great mistakes sometimes of thinking

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our tasks too easy of accomplishment and fail for that reason—and are disappointed for that reason. Hence I am going, in this lecture, to put before you in some detail just the difficulties the movement toward unity has to encounter in America. I suppose you will say as you hear them that they are the same difficulties we and all other nations have. This may be true. Yet America is different. We have every communion represented in vast numbers: eighteen millions of Roman Catholics, nearly eight millions of Baptists, and nearly eight millions of Methodists, two and one-half millions of Lutherans, and so on. Furthermore we have every race. We have vast extent of territories. We have hundreds of Home Missions churches in our very midst. Anyhow, whether other nations have these same difficulties or not—and many of them are universal—we have them in their most pronounced expression and coloured by our own conditions.

1. First of all we who want unity have perhaps not been able to give it such clear definition that the people have a real vision of what we are after or what it will be when it comes. I am not sure that we ourselves quite

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know. "What form will this 'United Church of America' take?" we are continually asked, when we use that word. Will it be one Church, with a central authority, say, a Bishop, with one assembly or convention, with one form of worship? Or will it be a loose assembly of free Churches, each Church or each communion free to pursue its own way, use its own form of worship, simply bound to the one central power by some flexible tie, thus combining liberty and authority in some new and peculiar way? Or, as Bishop Macdowell has put it: "What would be the practical form of Church life in a town where union had come? What would be the form of the organised Church life? Under a perfect expression of Christian unity in the given town, what would be the form of Christian belief in such a town? What would be the form of worship in such a town? What would be the practical programme of a united Church in such a town? Its programme locally, its programme in the large world?" I need not pursue the question, but you can see what a difficult problem faces us. It is hard to get people enthusiastic for a vague scheme, for a vision, for an ideal they may feel is good, but

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cannot visualise. This is where the advocates of federation have the advantage over the advocates of organic union. They put a carefully elaborated plan of federation before the Churches. They say: "Let every communion elect ten delegates to a central council and this council will together work for temperance, economic justice, industrial good-will, the suppression of child-labour, international peace," and it is done. Thus you have your Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. It came about exactly in that way. It is the way federation always comes. It is comparatively easy. It is Christian unity. It may be that it is by that path the much higher and much more indefinable ideal of organic union is gradually to come.

I sometimes wonder whether it would not be the way of wisdom for those of us who are seeking organic union to recognise that we cannot get the people interested until we can visualise the movement, show them what it would mean, what it would be, and for a while direct all our efforts upon the attainment of one first object, namely the recognition by each Protestant communion of the validity of orders

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in all the others. Could that be secured, or some method found of common ordination, we should then have exchange of pulpits, and what is of infinitely more importance, ministers of one communion freely administering the sacrament in all other communions. That would be a great advance in real organic union, and is a plain, evident, visible goal—more real than federation even. Of course that would mean, in America, that the negotiations would at first be confined to all the Protestant communions with the Episcopalian, for all except the Episcopalians recognise all orders as valid and exchange pulpits freely, and, with the exception of some of the Baptists, allow ministers of any denomination to administer the Lord's Supper. This is why the attempt at a Concordat between the Episcopalians and the Congregationalists is really about the most valuable contribution to the cause. It aroused great interest just because it was a definite proposal everybody could understand. Having once secured this step—and if we should secure it almost everything else would be easy in comparison—we could then take up these other questions of bishops, forms of service, common

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administrative centres, combined mission endeavour, etc., one by one.

2. The next obstacle in the way is that thing which one meets in every movement, namely perfect satisfaction with things as they are. It is what someone has called ecclesiastical inertia. It prevails in the Church as in every other walk of life. It is very common as anyone knows, who has tried to carry out a reform in any sphere. Let the industrial order alone, the social order, the international order. It is the same thing one met at Paris at the Peace Conference. The different denominations in America have thousands of good people in them who belong to this satisfied class. They look upon advocates of Church Union as disturbers of the peace, somewhat as they look upon socialists and labour agitators.

3. There is another group, however, who want things to remain as they are because they really believe the present denominational order is best. They see loss rather than gain in one great merger of the denominations. One frequently hears it argued with great conviction that much more is accomplished for the Kingdom of God by the separate communions vying

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with each other in good works ; that competition in the work of the Church is as necessary as in industry ; that it is even best for the small town to have five weak Churches of different faiths than one strong Church. They sincerely believe that missions would suffer were the denominational method dropped. They feel that their own people have a pride in the denomination they would never have in one great united Church. Furthermore, they believe the permanency of a united Church would be impossible. In fifty years it would all be broken up again by defections. Human nature has not changed in this regard. Differences of opinions on doctrine or orders would arise as in the early Church, and great groups would separate themselves from the one Church as they have always done. These people, and they are a vast number, thus conscientiously believe that there is no gain in union, but loss, and oppose it. It is one of the three or four sources from which one meets active opposition. Generally it is only indifference or perplexity one has to overcome, but here one meets real antagonism.

4. Another obstacle, one which Bishop

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McDowell has somewhat stressed in his public utterances, is the danger of antagonising people, or at least not winning their support to the cause by presenting small and inferior motives. People are to be won to the cause only by presenting great, divine, holy motives. Many, though, have argued for union on the basis of financial economy. Millions of dollars would be saved by all going into one great Church, with one central administration. One church with one minister would be sufficient in thousands of localities now having five. There would be the same saving on the mission fields. This is all true, but people are never won to any high crusade by the motive of economy. Just as we have seen how the cost of war has no deterrent effect upon a people who believe that an ideal is at stake, so the cost of denominationism will never convert the high-minded Churchman to the ideal of unity. Let me quote Bishop McDowell at this point :

“Now, Christian Unity will not float simply upon the desire to reduce expenses, for it would be a means of grace to many Christians or to many Church members whom I know not to have the expenses reduced in

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their behalf, but to have them increased. The motive of simply cutting down certain overlapping items is not quite a sufficient motive to carry a great enterprise like this.

“The motive for the unity of the Christian Churches must have size enough to carry it, size enough to carry it over obstacles that are in the way, size enough to carry it in the long years in which the Christian Church will serve its Master and Lord.

“Ask yourselves these questions: Can an united Church find its mind and the mind of Christ better than a divided Church? And the answer is not in doubt.

“Can an united Church find its voice and utter the voice of Christ better than a broken and dismembered Church? And the answer is not in doubt.

“Can one Church, one in its passion, one in its spirit, one in its devotion, one in its opposition to all evil, one in its consecration to all good, be used by Christ, the head of the Church, in the world's movements more effectually than can the broken and dismembered portions of such Church? The answer is not in doubt.”

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5. There is no doubt that one thing which stands in the way of unity is something one hates to mention, but must, because it has often been in evidence, and that is the fear, on the part of thousands of ecclesiastics, clergymen and administrative officers, of losing their positions. A high official in the British Churches has told us that this was no doubt one of the things that has greatly hindered the movement in England. It is so with us too. Organic union would mean the loss of salary by many thousand clergymen and officers. It would also mean the loss of position and power on the part of many administrators and secretaries, and this loss is harder to bear than even the loss of money. Some laymen anxious for union have expressed the opinion that here was going to be a real field of battle if the movement ever won the enthusiasm of the people.

6. Closely allied to this is the fact that there are great vested interests at stake. Each denomination has property worth millions of dollars of which it is very jealous and the idea of pooling all this in one central board is more than some of the communions can bear to think of. It is the thought of letting the

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administration pass out of their hands that disturbs many of our ecclesiastics. This and the previous obstacles I have mentioned may not seem to have much weight. But they do have, and they crop up every time the movement gathers headway. We who have been on the Administrative Committee of the Federal Council of Churches where organic union is not mentioned, where only co-operation of denominations is practised, have had to exercise eternal care and vigilance not to arouse the suspicions and reprimands of the denominations by even unintentionally or slightly trespassing upon their prerogatives. Whenever the discussion of actual union comes up all these obstacles mentioned above are brought out and purposely put in the way.

V

Obstacles to be Overcome : Traditions and Tastes

THE obstacles we have been considering are the lesser ones, most easily overcome of all, and for that reason I have put them first. I now pass to a second group which are of much greater importance and which will be banished with difficulty ; yet might be swept away or consumed in the heat of a great enthusiasm. They are not the greatest obstacles of all—those I am keeping to the last—but they are four real obstacles, real in a sense that they are more deep-rooted in the hearts of the people than those things I have been mentioning.

1. First of all there are Traditions. Every family, every race, every country, every Church has its traditions. They are things that have been held and loved for ages. They come to the children as precious heritages. They are learned as stories at the mother's knee. They

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are kept alive by the guardians of the nation and the Church. They are sacred, holy things. They have great power, and are often appealed to when the time for battle comes—in Church as well as in State. They are greatly loved, and the thought of uprooting them gives great pain. Every great denomination has these, and one reason that many shudder at the thought of organic union is that they may have to lose these precious things. As Professor McGiffert has said : “ Men become attached to the body within which they were born and to which they belong. Habits of mind, family affections, traditional loyalties, love of accustomed ways—many influences keep Churches apart which had nothing to do with parting them.” So strong is this sense of tradition that some could probably never feel quite at home in a communion outside the one in which they had been born and had lived their life.

2. There is also a *denominational patriotism*, if I may so call it, which is just as strong as a national patriotism. Men love the communion in which they have been born and reared as much as they love their country. Now just as when the love of country is very strong men

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fear to enter into any association with other states for fear of a super-government, a government that will take away certain national rights and prerogatives, a government where each individual nation entering in will have to forgo certain privileges, practices and functions for the good of the whole, so when denominationalism, which is really often patriotism for the communion to which one belongs, runs high, men fear to consider any association even, to say nothing of union, with other Churches, which is going to mean a sort of super-government, and going to usurp privileges formally exercised by the individual communions. We have had a perfect illustration of what I am trying to say here in America. The real reason the United States did not enter the League of Nations was just exactly that fear of losing certain individual rights, privileges and functions if she became part of a League where there was this super-government, or where it was thought to be. We are meeting exactly this same fear in the denominations. There is not time to point out the fallacy here, both on the part of the nations and the Churches. I am simply mentioning it as a real obstacle,

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met at every turn. I suppose its solution will come in time as it has begun to come with nations.

3. Another real problem we should have in America, did any real, outward union of the Churches come, would be the satisfying of the two utterly divergent temperaments which we have in our population, with any one form of service. The original American is Puritan, and he still makes up, with his Lutheran brethen, the greater part of our American Protestantism. But we have a large Latin infusion and, what is more to the point, our young people are becoming more Latin than Puritan as education in art and music increases and the Continental influence makes itself felt. Of course the greater part of the Episcopal Church has never been Puritan and as the Catholic party within it grows it tends to become less and less so. Now the Puritan is utterly unmoved by a service that feeds the very soul of the Latin. The Latin is lifted to the gate of heaven by elaborate music—the average Presbyterian or Congregationalist or Baptist cares nothing about it. It does not move his soul at all. It never gets beyond his ears. The symbolism which

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shadows forth heavenly things is meaningless to the Puritan. It is mummary and he wants a service where God's word is read from the Bible and the gospel preached. He likes to hear hymns sung, but it is more for the words than the music. The exquisite order of the liturgy, its high and holy beauty, its grandeur, are all lost upon the average Methodist, who wants a service where there is the freest expression of the religious experience and much brotherly love. The sociability displayed at the close of a Protestant service reminds the average Catholic of an afternoon tea. The Puritan knows nothing of that high ecstasy the Latin feels under the spell of the music, liturgy, and the presence of the Sacrament. On the other hand the average Puritan service with its sermon and hymn singing is as bare and bleak to a Catholic as a granite mountain. Now what are we going to do when we have but one church in the village? Are we going to have two services in the same church at different hours—one for the Puritan, another for the Latin, one free, another with liturgy, one for those who live by sacraments, another for those who live by sermons? It will be a problem.

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4. There is another problem which will either pass away before union comes, or will become one of the greatest obstacles of all, namely, the comprehending in the same Church those who believe in creeds and those who do not. Of course the great Episcopal Churches, both the Protestant Episcopal and the Methodist Episcopal, and the Lutherans, as well as the Catholics, repeat the Apostles' Creed in the service of the Church. In the other communions each individual Church decides the question of creeds for itself. The growing custom in many Churches is to drop the recital of the Apostles' Creed (or any other) in the service. Most Congregational and most Baptist Churches have, each Church for itself, a statement of doctrine or faith, to which it asks the candidate for Church membership to assent. The Presbyterian Church has its confession. But in many of the large Churches, especially in the Congregational, doctrinal creeds are being altogether dispensed with, and pledges of devotion to Christ and His service being substituted. One can see the conflict that is sure to come when we have the one Church. Already this tendency of the Free

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Churches is frightening our Anglican brethren as one can see by reading the reports of the English conferences on unity. To the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Catholic, the Church is just as much a witness to faith as to life, and a creedless Church is as much an anomaly as a Church without the spirit of Christ. Christianity is both a truth and a life, and the great communions which have borne witness to the truth are not going to join forces with communions which witness to the life only, and have no creeds except a declaration of purpose, generally more ethical than religious, to follow Jesus in the good life. Do not the Buddhists the same? One can see how strong this feeling is when one hears a representative of the great credal Churches speak as one finds Bishop Manning speaking in "The Call to Unity": "The Christian religion is what Christ makes it, not what any of us think or feel about it. Approach toward unity will be made not by disregard of Christian truth, but by fuller and deeper apprehension of it. As believers in Christ we cannot take the position that creed and doctrine are unimportant. Doctrine is only a definite statement of that

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which is believed to be true. Truth, which is the voice of God, is not unimportant in religion. A religion only of sentiment or feeling could not satisfy us. Religion must speak to the need of the whole man—mind, heart and spirit. The Christian religion does so speak. Jesus Christ is ‘The Life’ to be lived ; but He is also ‘The Truth’ to be believed. Religion without doctrine would be a religion without a knowledge of Christ. . . . If we are to be in relationship with Christ we must know who He is, what is His present power, how we may have fellowship with Him, and those are all questions of doctrine. The answer of these questions is our creed.”

VI

Further Obstacles to be Overcome : Divergent Views of Faith and Order

I now come to the third group of obstacles, those which are going to be hardest to overcome. One or two of these seem to me almost insurmountable except by some miracle from on high. Perhaps the first two that I shall mention belong with the second group, for there have already been seen several instances of conversion. For this reason I will mention them first ; but they are great obstacles.

1. First of all I refer to the fact that many of the denominations are based upon real and deep-rooted convictions. They may not always be the convictions which caused their separation from the original Church where they are separated, but they are now very real and important. The denomination believes it is called to abide by these convictions and to witness to these truths. In our discussions on

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Christian unity we are prone to say that it is only the lesser things that separate us ; we are one on the great, fundamental, essential things. But some of the denominations consider these very things that divide us great, fundamental, essential things. Thus, to the Baptist, adult baptism is a deep-rooted conviction because he believes that only on repentance of sins can baptism be offered and membership in the Church. And he does not believe the parent can stand in the place of the child or be its will. He holds to immersion as the only form of baptism because it is scriptural and he cannot recognise any other mode. Again, almost all Episcopalians believe that the Church was divinely and directly founded by our Lord, and that priestly powers come only through a bestowal from those who are in direct succession of those whom He ordained as heads of His Church. To many these dividing convictions are as real and fundamental as those things we all hold in common. The problem before us before unity can come is either to make room for all these convictions in the united Church, or convince the brethren that they are not necessarily of the eternal substance of the faith.

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In a previous lecture I called attention to the fact that already there were signs of yielding on some of these points. The instances of intercommunion between Baptists and the other denominations are multiplying rapidly. Some Baptist Churches have already received members by letter from other communions where immersion is not practised. It is very evident that the mind of each denomination is being more and more turned from these things which caused the original schism, and being fixed more and more on the great things of the faith. It is as we become absorbed in the great things of faith—God, Christ, eternity, sin, redemption, the Kingdom of God—that we begin to forget all about the lesser things. But these lesser things still remain and are very real issues in those thousands of minds who have not yet become so possessed with prophetic vision and great enthusiasms, and it is with these minds we have to reckon when we begin talking union.

2. There is going to be difficulty also when we come to the actual establishing of the united Church in the fact that in all the non-episcopal denominations there are great

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numbers who do not believe in central authority of any kind, whether bishops, presbyteries, conventions, assemblies, or councils. Thus in the Congregational, Baptist and Disciples' communions, every local Church is absolutely free. There is no authority above it. It can call whom it wishes for its pastor, write its own creed, or do without one if it wishes and follow its own form of worship. It is free—independent. It has local autonomy, as we call it. The only power the denomination has is to ostracise it if it departs too far from the denominational standards. Thousands of the members of these Churches—pastors and laymen—believe in this liberty and freedom with all their souls and will have nothing to do with Bishops or Superintendents of any kind.

It is not a question with them as to whether they shall recognise the bishopric as a divinely-ordained thing, possessing an unique power bestowed upon it by Christ and transmitted through the ages by apostolic succession, or shall insist that bishops shall be elected by the congregation and hold constitutional powers as does any elected officer. These things do not worry them in the least. They will have

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no one outside the local Church exercising any power over them. How are these and those who believe in bishops going to get together in an united Church? This is another of our hard problems.*

3. Now we are getting down to the real problems—around which the final battle will have to be fought—the obstacles that will only be surmounted by the grace of God. There is the question of orders. I need not dwell long upon it, for it is a universal problem, and as I intimated under a previous heading is perhaps the one problem to which all the Churches which seek union should now address themselves to the exclusion of everything else. The question of orders is not the greatest or the final problem, but it must be solved before the greater obstacle can be overcome. It is a question so far as Protestantism is concerned

* An interesting eruption of this feeling was manifested when Dr. Amory H. Bradford was made moderator of the National Congregational Council about twenty years ago. The Moderators previous to Dr. Bradford had confined themselves simply to presiding at the meetings of the Council. Dr. Bradford got released from his own Church and undertook a tour of the leading Congregational churches across the Continent and back, arranging also to meet groups of clergymen in the various centres to counsel and advise with them. A tremendous hue and cry arose from many quarters and we were even warned against "this new popery."

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simply between the Anglican or Episcopalian communion on the one side and all the great company of Churches on the other. For all denominations in America with the exception of the Protestant Episcopal, recognise the orders of ministers in all the other denominations as valid. The Episcopal Church does not recognise the orders of any Protestant minister outside its own communion as valid (I suppose it would acknowledge the validity of the orders of a Roman Catholic priest, although the Roman Church makes no distinction between the priests of the Protestant Episcopal Church and the ministers of the other communions. They are good fellows; all of them, but only laymen.) It is not really of much use to discuss all the other things about union which we are discussing in America until this problem is solved. The ministers of the Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Disciples, Lutheran and Congregational communions consider their ordination just as valid, regular, divine, and fruitful as their Episcopalian brethren consider theirs. There is not the slightest probability in the world that they will ever change this point of view. Most of them are not sufficiently interested in

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Church Union to think about the problem so long as the Episcopal Church holds its present position. Most of those who desire Church Union with all their heart and soul, and who would be willing to make almost any sacrifice for it, cannot make a sacrifice which denies the priesthood or ministerial rights they have been exercising for years, and which would seem to betray their brethren. I think—indeed, I know—that it is absolutely futile to expect any number of men from these denominations to accept re-ordination for the sake of unity. I cannot say whether it is futile or not to expect the Episcopal Church ever to recognise the ordinations of the clergy of the other groups. The first step really amounting to anything in Church Union would be taken were that done. Meantime the only way of approaching the problem that I can see is that proposed by the Concordat in America or better still by the Bishop of London in England, and that is to have candidates for the ministry when they come up for ordination ordained, all of them, Episcopalian and the others, by a bishop of the Episcopal Church, a bishop of the Methodist Church, and by a clergyman from each of the

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other demominations—Baptist, Presbyterian, Disciples, Lutheran and Congregational. It would be understood then that they were being ordained not only to the Christian ministry, but being ordained, that is given authority, to minister in all the communions represented. I do not know whether the various communions will ever reach this point, for the reaction to the proposal thus far shows that most of them consider it but as a subterfuge of the Episcopal group to get around a point they will not yield. I think the only prospect there is, is that some young men may come along who will consider that their ordination into the ministry would be valid proceeding from any Christian congregation or group of Christian ministers, but who will be willing to have Episcopalian ordination on the strict understanding that it was not to the ministry but a commission to serve in the Episcopal Church. The trouble with all of these proposals in which the Protestant Episcopal Church is concerned is that they seem to be sort of laboured and indirect ways of getting around a difficulty which does not exist for any Church except the Episcopal. When the Episcopal Church suggests reciprocal ordination,

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so to speak, all the other communions answer to the effect that there can be no reciprocity where one side has already recognised the ordination of the other. The Free Churches already recognise the orders of the Episcopal Church as valid—there is nothing left but for the Episcopal Church to recognise theirs, they say.

4. When all else is done, we come to the final great obstacle to the re-union of Christendom, which is felt more I suppose in England than in America if one considers Protestantism only, but which, if we are to consider the Roman Catholic Church in any scheme of union, will be the great and final obstacle in America. I am thinking now, however, of the re-union of Protestant Churches, especially, and of the Anglican Church, if the so-called High, or Catholic wing is to be included in the scheme. There we have a very real and vital problem. I refer, of course, to the breach that separates the evangelical and the sacramental groups within the Church. One who has not had much contact with both of these groups—as I have had—cannot quite realise how far apart they are. They are so far apart that sometimes

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it seems as if they held two different religions. To the first group, the evangelical, belong practically all Protestants ; to the second group belong all Catholics, whether within the Roman, Greek, or Anglican fold—and their number is increasing in the Anglican fold. The evangelical believes that God is directly apprehended of the human soul. He resents the interposition of a priest of any sort and does not think of the Sacrament so much as a means of grace as a memorial service. Religion is individual—it is God and the human soul having dealings with each other. The Gospel is its seat of authority in religion, and it is constantly appealing to the Gospel and seldom mentioning the Church. The relation to Christ is through the Gospel and not through the Church. In the Gospel one finds Christ and chooses Him to be his Lord, Master and personal Saviour. The Church has no divine authority. It is simply the company of those who have been saved by the Gospel associating themselves together for mutual helpfulness, service, and worship—although worship is the least emphasised aspect. (If one wants to see the real and ultimate nature of *evangelicalism*

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or *Protestantism* stated at its best, let him read Dr. T. R. Glover's little book in reply to the Lambeth Appeal, "The Free Churches and Re-union." Dr. Clifford welcomed it as expressing exactly the point of view of the Free Churches. In it the Gospel, and the individual's choice of Jesus, are constantly emphasised as the essence of Christianity. The Lord's Supper is simply the meeting of the faithful around the table. Christ may be there in spirit, as He is always where His children are ; but the supper has no unique sacramental value. The Church is only the association of those who have been saved and its real function is the preaching of the Gospel.) So to the evangelical the Bible, not the Church, is the seat of authority in religion. The Church came into being simply as the voluntary association of the converts in Jerusalem and elsewhere. Whatever form it assumed as time went on came from growth and natural development, not from divine appointment. The Church has always been cherished as the company of the elect, but it is not the chief means of grace nor the final seat of authority in religion. Some of the great

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evangelical movements of the past have for years pursued their way outside the Church, although they have always been drawn back into it again, simply because of the law of gravitation of the faithful, the like-minded, the followers of Jesus Christ to each other.

Over against the Evangelical Group—worlds distant from them—is the Sacramental or Catholic Group. The Sacramentarian or Catholic, whether in the Episcopal or the Roman Church, finds his due approach to God through the Sacraments and through the Sacraments the Grace of God is ministered to him. The Church more than the Bible is the seat of authority. The Church was before the Bible, and was not simply the society of the faithful naturally meeting together, but was divinely appointed by our Lord and given authority to represent Him in the world. It is the perpetuation of Christ, and has His power and speaks with His authority. The evangelical as an individual goes to the Gospel and gets what he may or will from it. The Catholic abhors this individualism, and listens to the divinely guided Church for his direction. All the members of the Church are of one mind

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as well as of one soul. Unity, one common mind, is of the essence of Catholicism. The Church has the Catholic's love, too, for it is his source of blessing, his divine guide, his home. (The different attitude toward the Church on the part of the Protestant and the Catholic is often remarked. This is the cause.) The priesthood was divinely appointed as was the Church. Through the Church comes salvation. In the Church is the voice of God. How to reconcile these two groups (with the necessary divergence in all forms of worship, too, to which I have previously referred) will be to my mind the last and greatest task that will confront the Church in the achievement of union.

Of course this remains to be said : all these obstacles may be swept away by some miracle of God and union come, as other things have come, as a direct gift from heaven. I sometimes wonder whether if suddenly, under the impulse of some great, holy cause, some new crusade, perhaps led by some new prophet of the Lord, a great and holy passion for Jesus Christ possessed the whole Church, it might not be so consuming, so touched of heavenly

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wonder, that in this absorbing love and devotion to the Lord all its citizens might forget all about their denominations and remember only that they were citizens of heaven. I remember how Rev. Richard Roberts and Lord Hugh Cecil during the course of the war said that perhaps the time might come when Christians would so feel their citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven that they would rise above nationality, as it were, realising that they are all brothers in that super-nationality which was in Christ, and so learn war no more. I remember Dr. J. H. Jowett saying once when unity was being discussed in England that we should all find unity when we were so consumed with a holy passion for Jesus Christ that we could not even remember the things that divide us. So it may be that some day the Church will be suddenly caught of some passionate, burning enthusiasm for Christ and His Kingdom and suddenly *find* itself one where in vain it had tried to *make* itself one.

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